

D.S. Etheridge Automobile Showroom and Tire Store  
329 Market Street  
Chattanooga  
Hamilton County  
Tennessee

HABS No. TN-206

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C.

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

D. S. ETHERIDGE AUTOMOBILE SHOWROOM  
AND TIRE STORE

HABS No. TN-206

Location: 329 Market Street (100 feet from southwest corner of Fourth and Market Streets), Chattanooga, Hamilton County, Tennessee.

Present Owner and Occupant: Newton Chevrolet Company, Incorporated, 329 Market Street (in process of moving to new location).

Significance: The D. S. Etheridge Automobile Showroom and Tire Store was built 1924-25. It is a well preserved and excellent example of the best new architectural expression brought about by the popularity of the automobile. The building combines classic beauty with commercial functionalism and is notable for its terra cotta work, arched openings with plate glass windows, and spacious interior volume.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1924-25.
2. Architect: Louis H. Bull, Chattanooga.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The building's lots are 19 and 21 in the original town plot of Chattanooga. The following is a record of past property ownerships:

Bk. 489, p. 423, 7/30/1924

R. O. Bennett and wife to D. S. Etheridge. The south 1/2 of the Lot 19 measuring 25' x 200' fronting on Market Street 25 feet and running back to Broad 200 feet for \$13,250. Recorded 10/19/1925.

Bk. 489, p. 422, 7/30/1924

Raymond Wallace and wife to D. S. Etheridge, Incorporated. The north 1/2 of the south 1/2 of Lot 19, Market Street, fronting on Market 25 feet and running back to Broad 200 feet for \$9,500. Recorded 10/19/1925.

Bk. 489, p. 421, 7/30/1924

S. P. Long and wife to D. S. Etheridge, Incorporated. The north 25 feet of Lot 21, Market Street, fronting 25 feet on west side of Market Street and running back 200 feet to Broad, for \$10,750. Recorded 10/19/1925.

Bk. 466, p. 692, 2/28/1925

Sam Erwin (Mrs. Gray Warner Marshall, et al, vs. Porter Warner, et al, Chancey Court Suit #20534) to D. S. Etheridge. South 50 feet of north 75 feet of Lot 21, Market Street. Fronting on Market 50 feet and running back to Broad 200 feet for \$20,000. Recorded 3/3/1925.

Bk. 499, p. 302, 12/3/1925

Deed of Trust, D. S. Etheridge to William A. Law, Jr., of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania Mutual Insurance Company for \$60,000. Recorded 12/18/1925.

Bk. 972, p. 227, 5/1/1948

D. S. Etheridge Company, Incorporated, to Newton Chevrolet, Incorporated. The south 50 feet of north 75 feet of Lot 21 for \$50,000. Subject to city zoning ordinance #1843 and party wall agreement on north wall.

Bk. 1073, p. 78, 12/31/1951

Jack Hixon for D. S. Etheridge Company, Incorporated, to Newton Chevrolet, Incorporated, three tracts. South 25 feet of Lot 19; North 1/2 of south 1/2 of Lot 19; North 25 feet of Lot 21 for \$75,000. Subject to city zoning ordinance #2962. Recorded 12/31/1951.

4. Alterations and additions:

1938-1951: Showroom used and equipped as a bowling alley.  
1951: Showroom restored.  
1951: Tire store remodeled as a garage. Open center roof closed.

- B. Historical Context: D. S. Etheridge originally opened business in 1909 on Eleventh Street. He was one of the first Ford dealers in the South. About 1915 he moved his business to 401 Broad Street. There were no other buildings on lower Broad Street at this point. In 1916 Etheridge incorporated. In 1919 Etheridge began to expand. He increased his capital stock from \$30,000 to \$100,000. In 1922 he received the Lincoln franchise and in 1924 he began to buy up the property on the west side of Market Street to house his new Lincoln dealership, and the showroom and tire store were completed in 1925. In this same year Etheridge again increased his capital stock from \$100,000 to \$300,000. In 1926 he rented the adjoining building to the south. This had previously been the Hardwick Building housing the Buick-Cadillac dealership and was built circa 1910.

In 1931 Couch Jones Chevrolet sold out to Newton Chevrolet and Newton and Etheridge swapped buildings. Newton moved into the Hardwick building and Etheridge moved into the building at the present site of the Haney Building at 329 Broad Street.

The depression and the late 1930s were especially hard on the automobile business. By 1938 Etheridge's business operated almost entirely from his Broad Street location, and the Market Street Showroom was converted into a bowling alley which remained there till 1951. In 1941 Etheridge sold his Ford franchise to the Ray Dickerson Company chain and his four nephews who had worked with him many years bought out the Lincoln franchise.

In the 1940s, the tire store was a used car department. In the 1950s the business grew better and in 1951 Newton expanded its operations from the Hardwick Building next door to the showroom and tire store. Newton then restored the showroom and remodeled the tire store.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: See Significance statement on page 1.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The building is a one-story rectangular structure. The showroom measures 166' x 75', and the tire store is 50' x 165'.
2. Foundations: Concrete slab.
3. Walls: Ceramic exterior facing. (Material of inner walls not recorded).
4. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Not recorded.
  - b. Windows: Large arched windows.
5. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: Shed roof with green ceramic Spanish-style tiles.

C. Description of Interior:

Not recorded.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Interviews:

Mr. H. G. Law, President of Newton Chevrolet Company and Architect.

Mr. Joe Lawrence, President of Lawrence-Doster Motors and nephew of D. S. Etheridge (deceased). He had been an employee of Etheridge's business from 1927 to 1940.

B. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Hamilton County Deed Books, Hamilton County Courthouse. Property ownership records.

Hamilton County Tax Assessors Records, Hamilton County Courthouse, Chattanooga. Property ownership records.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the Tennessee Historical Commission and the East Tennessee Historical Society. Under the direction of John Poppliers, Chief of HABS, the project was completed during the Summer of 1974.

Susan McCown, a staff historian in the HABS/HAER Washington, D.C. office, edited the written data in 1985 for transmittal to the Library of Congress.

Historical section prepared by:

Joseph L. Herndon  
HABS Project Historian  
September, 1974

Architectural section prepared by:

Susan McCown  
HABS Historian  
Spring, 1985